

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1-6 and 9 are amended. No new matter is added. Claims 1-9 are pending and under consideration.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112

The Office Action rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being narrative and indefinite. Applicant makes a *bona fide* effort herewith to enhance the claims to conform to current U.S. patent claim practice. In view of the claim amendments, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102

The Office Action rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 7,010,387 to Lantry et al. (hereinafter "Lantry").

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Lantry discloses a robotic data storage library having a plurality of storage locations, each capable of holding at least one data storage element, and an actual exit port for transferring a data storage element out of the library. (See Lantry's Abstract.) At least one of the storage locations is defined as a virtual exit port corresponding to the actual exit port so that the data storage element to be transferred out of the library is transported between its storage location and the virtual port before being transferred out of the library. In other words, the virtual port is a temporary storage location.

Independent claims 1 and 5 are amended herewith to clarify the claimed subject matter. The claim amendments are fully supported by the originally filed specification and claims, for example, page 14, line 8 through page 16, line 7.

Lantry fails to disclose "controlling the robot to convey the storage medium from the first housing portion to the turnout housing unit based on a first medium conveyance instruction from a first host computer having access to the first housing portion when operation mode is transfer mode." In contrast to Lantry where the virtual port is merely one of the plurality of storage location, according to the preamble of claim 1 the "library apparatus [has] a housing unit that is logically divided into a **plurality of housing portions**, a **turnout housing unit** housing temporarily a storage medium, and a **robot** to convey the storage medium from the housing unit to the turnout housing unit or from the turnout housing unit to the housing unit, with a **plurality of**

host computers being connected to the library apparatus, the plurality of host computers **each having access to at least one portion of the housing unit**, the data transfer method enabling the storage medium, housed in a first housing portion of the housing unit, to be used by a host computer having access to a second housing portion of the housing unit, different from the first housing portion." First, the turnout housing unit of claim 1 is not one of the plurality of housing portions that may be viewed as corresponding to the plurality of storage locations. Second, a robot conveys the storage medium from the housing unit to the turnout housing unit or from the turnout housing unit to the housing unit. In contrast, in Lantry the storage medium is moved to the virtual port only as a temporary storage before being output. According to claim 1 not all the host computers have access to all the housing portion, the robot is controlled "to convey the storage medium from the first housing portion to the turnout housing unit based on a **first medium conveyance instruction from a first host computer having access to the first housing portion**." Lantry does not anticipate the above-emphasized feature of claim 1.

Additionally, Lantry does not anticipate "notifying a second host computer having access to the second housing portion, different from the first housing portion, that a new storage medium has been inserted into the turnout housing when conveying the storage medium to the turnout housing unit is completed." That is, a second computer different from the first computer who issued the first medium conveyance instruction, receives a notification. This operation is supported by step 75 of FIG.6, described on page 15, line 24 through page 16, line 7.

In contrast to Lantry which is directed to outputting a recording medium, the method of claim 1 recites a method of transferring a recording medium between different host computers.

In view of the above arguments, claim 1 and claims 2-4 depending from claim 1 patentably distinguish over Lantry.

Claim 5 and claims 6-9 depending from claim 5 patentably distinguishes over lantry at least because Lantry does not teach or suggest the following features recited in claims 5:

- a robot controlling unit controlling the robot to convey the storage medium from a first housing portion to the turnout housing unit, based on a first medium conveyance instruction from a first host computer having access to the first housing portion of the housing unit, and thereafter, controlling the robot to convey the storage medium from the turnout housing unit to a second housing portion, different from the first housing portion of the housing unit, based on a second medium conveyance instruction from a second host computer having access to the second housing portion; and

- a completion notifying unit notifying the second host computer that a new storage medium has been inserted into the turnout housing unit when conveying the storage medium from the first housing portion to the turnout housing unit has been completed.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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